



John E. Baldacci
Governor

STATE OF MAINE
DIVISION OF HEALTH ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DRINKING WATER PROGRAM
11 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0011
Tel (207) 287-2070 Fax (207) 287-4172 TTY (207)287-5550



John R. Nicholas
Commissioner

Operator Expense Reimbursement Program **Continuing Education Training**

Request for Proposals

Introduction:

The Maine Drinking Water Program (DWP) and the Board of Licensure of Water System Operators (Board), as part of the USEPA Operator Expense Reimbursement Program (Program), are requesting proposals to provide continuing education training for licensed water system operators. A total of \$108,000 is available for continuing education training for state fiscal year 2005.

The DWP and Board have selected the topics for the training from results of operator surveys. Funding for training will be awarded separately for each topic. The selected training organizations will develop, schedule, organize, and conduct training programs throughout the State of Maine.

Contact Person:

Teresa L. Trott
Drinking Water Program
Department of Health and Human Services
11 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0011
Tel 287-7485
Fax 287-4172
Teresa.trott@maine.gov

Background:

The 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop guidelines specifying minimum standards for licensing and re-licensing of operators of community and non-transient, non-community (NTNC) public water systems. Also within the 1996 amendments to the SDWA, EPA was authorized to reimburse the cost of training and licensing for persons operating community and NTNC water systems serving 3,300 persons or fewer. The State of Maine has received approximately \$1.5 million as part of this operator expense reimbursement grant (ERG).

The Goals for the ERG are to:

- Increase the number of licensed operators.
- Provide adequate training to prepare operators for licensing and for continuing education of operators after licensing.
- Increase the knowledge of water operators for the protection of public health.
- Reduce the financial burden for owners and operators of small water systems.

As the primacy agency in the State of Maine, the DWP will implement the Program. The Board serves as an advisory group to help guide the DWP in the implementation of the Program. The DWP uses a portion of the ERG funds to administer the Program. The DWP also utilizes a portion of the funds to pay for a training position at the DWP. This trainer will serve as a resource to all training organizations.

Table 1 illustrates the number of public water systems affected by the operator licensing requirements and who are eligible for the ERG. Of the 735 eligible systems, 618 have a population below 500 persons. The majority of these 618 systems will be classified as Very Small Water Systems (VSWS).

Table 1			
Number of ERG Eligible Public Water Systems			
Population Range	Non-Transient, Non-Community	Community	Total
25 to 500	345	273	618
501 to 1000	24	29	53
1001 to 1500	3	23	26
1501 to 2000		16	16
2001 to 2500		14	14
2501 to 3000		3	3
3001 to 3300		5	5
Total	372	363	735

Maine is fortunate to have many high quality training organizations presently providing training to operators. The training needs for the State's operators vary greatly. Table 2 breaks down presently licensed operators by classification and shows the required training contact hours for license renewal.

Table 2		
Number of operators by Classification		
Classification	Number of licensed Operators as of Jan 2004	Training Contact Hours Required per 2 yr cycle
Very Small Water System	119	6
Class I	156	12
Class II	268	18
Class III & IV	384	24

Many of the operators in Maine operate their respective systems as a secondary task or employment. Time constraints due to primary tasks or employment often interfere with traditional training locations and times. Innovative approaches to reach underserved geographic locations and operators are encouraged.

Scope of work to be performed:

1. Provide continuing education training courses for operators seeking to advance their knowledge and renew their licenses on the following topics:
 - a) Water chemistry and treatment chemicals
 - b) Water quality in distribution systems
 - c) Backflow prevention
 - d) Bacteria, viruses and parasites
 - e) Leak detection and water audits
 - f) Chemical handling safety
 - g) Drinking water sampling procedures
 - h) Water system hydraulics
 - i) Developing written safety plans
 - j) Electrical conservation and electrical safety in water systems
2. All training courses shall comply with the Board's "Policy for Renewal Training Courses for Water System Operators Recertification"
3. Training courses shall be held in various locations throughout the State.
4. Each presentation of the training course must reach a minimum of 5 small system operators.
5. Course duration shall depend upon subject matter.
6. Provide each student with handout material covering the course content.
7. Charge a course fee for the handout materials. The fee shall be a minimum of \$10.00 and not exceed \$20.00. Fees received from the students shall be retained by the training organization.
8. Training organization may work with third party organizations to provide this training.
9. The intent of the Program is to increase operator-training opportunities. Funded sessions must be distinct from already scheduled training sessions.
10. Remote sites must be proctored to assure attendance. There must be the capability for student – instructor interaction.
11. All training dates and locations are to be discussed with the DWP for potential scheduling conflicts before advertising the training program.
12. Course advertisement must include "funding for course provided through the Maine Drinking Water Program".
13. The training organization shall provide quarterly reports including the following:
 - a) Listing of courses offered
 - b) Names and license numbers (as applicable) of individuals attending courses
 - c) Number of attendees at the courses.
 - d) Breakdown of operator attendance from small (< 3,300 pop.) and large (>3,300 pop) systems.
 - e) Summaries of evaluations.
 - f) The training organization shall submit a detailed expense reports. All expenses should be placed into one of the following major categories:
 - Direct costs – subcategories include Personnel, including fringe benefits, Supplies, Contracts, Equipment, Travel
 - Indirect costs – General office and operating expenses. Please refer to OMB Circular A-122

The DWP Will Provide:

- 1) Names and addresses of current operators.
- 2) Contact information for all public water systems.
- 3) The technical resources of the DWP staff.
- 4) Coordination of training to prevent conflicts in planning dates, locations and topics.

Proposal submittal:

Submit five (copies) of the proposals to

**Attention Valerie Russell,
Division of Purchases
Fourth Floor Cross Office Building
111 Sewall Street
9 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0009**

Cost estimates shall be included in a separate sealed envelope. The proposals must be received by 2:00 PM September 3, 2004. Applicants will be notified of the status of their application by September 17, 2004. Please allow 4-6 weeks from the date of award notification to start of the project. This will allow for final workplan approval and contract development. All projects should be completed by November 1, 2005. Due to the nature of this program, dates for training sessions must be approved by DWP. The Program is expected to last for approximately three years. Each contract for a training topic will be awarded for a one-time rotation. Contracts may be renewed up to three times without reissuing an RFP.

Format of Proposal:

Separate proposals must be submitted for each topic. Each proposal shall be submitted in 3 parts; an organizational summary, training topic proposal, cost proposal. Adherence to proposal submittal format is considered in rating criteria.

Part 1 Organizational Summary: This summary is intended to be an overview. It does not need to be repeated for each training topic submittal. This section of the proposal will be considered in the rating criteria for Instructor qualifications, Organization's experience and approach to work plan.

- a. Organization's purpose or mission statement
- b. The Organization's qualifications and experience in training water operators, narrative: This should include the organization's ability to reach targeted public water system audiences. These audiences will vary according to topic selection. The Program is designed to serve operators of small (population less than 3,300) water systems. This should not exclude operators of larger systems, as the training topics are useful to all operators.
- c. Proposed work plan. This should describe the manner in which the training provider will reach the largest audience. The work plan can be general for an overview and specific to each training topic. The proposal should include the number of training contact hours per topic.
- d. Resumes of trainers and a listing of the courses they will teach.
- e. A narrative of accounting practices used by the organization. This includes rates of fringe benefits, travel expense policies and general administrative fee principles.

Part 2 Training Topic Summary Page: One page for each training topic. This section of the proposal will be considered in the rating criteria for Instructor qualifications and approach to work plan. This summary page should include the following in order:

- a. Topic title (from above scope) and title of course
- b. Contact information:
 - i. Organization
 - ii. Name of contact person
- c. Approach to the project, narrative. This could be a course abstract, topics to be covered in the course, teaching methods, course contents etc.
- d. Project outcome/deliverable (TCHs provided, number of sites offered).
Include manner to reach participants and expected number of participants.
- e. List any partnering organizations that will be involved in the project.

Part 3 Cost Proposal: One page for each training topic. The cost proposals should be in a separate sealed envelope. This section of the proposal will be considered in the rating criteria for Cost and Approach to work plan

- a. Organization Name, training topic
- b. A total unit price per training session
- c. A budget projection table based upon the example below: Matching contributions may be available from other funding sources or contracts could be written with other agencies to assist in providing the training. Include justification for each budget line.

Sample Project Budget Table Format (*dollar values are for illustration only*):

Expense/Income	Justification	ERG request	Matching contributions	Totals
DIRECT COSTS				
Personnel				
Project Coordinator	22 hr @ \$13.60/hr	\$ 300		\$ 300
Instructor	\$290 per site	\$1450		\$1450
Volunteers	10 hrs @ \$25		\$250	\$ 250
Add as needed				
Travel	Miles x \$/mile	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 100
Add as needed				
Supplies and Materials	Folders 100@\$.50	\$ 50		\$ 50
Printing	\$.25 per page	\$ 250		\$ 250
Mailing	\$0.37/ piece/email/phones	\$ 70	\$ 30	\$ 100
Equipment	Use of owned projector		\$ 80	\$ 80
Other (specify)	Room rental agreements	\$ 500 Contract		\$ 500
INDIRECT	30%	\$ 300		\$ 300
Total expenditures		\$2970	\$410	\$3380
Income	40 students @ \$10 each		\$400	

Rating Criteria for selection:

Instructor Qualifications 20 points

Described instructor's knowledge and experience in water field (topic specific) and adult education.

Organization's Experience 20 points

Organization's experience with water related topics, adult training and ability to reach targeted public water systems. Organization's capability to provide the end product.

Approach to Work Plan 30 points

Extent to which the technical sessions will provide adult learners with the professional development to retain and gain the knowledge to successfully treat and distribute water or manage public water systems. Likelihood that the proposal will be achieved within the outlined budget. The "value" of the expended amount, keeping in mind, a goal of reaching a high number of small system operators. Value includes potential numbers of operators trained, partnering benefits and innovation of training techniques.

Cost 25 points

Cost Scoring Formula = $\frac{\text{Lowest Cost Proposal}}{\text{Cost of proposal being rated}} \times 25 = \text{score}$

Proposal Submittal 5 pts

Clarity and conciseness of proposal, adherence to format and relevance to RFP.

Evaluation

Upon receipt, a Department selected panel consisting of Department and other State staff and subject matter experts will evaluate all proposals. The evaluation will use the above criteria to score individual training topics and select the training product based on the highest score. The DWP reserves the right to select one or more training organizations to perform this training. Training organizations may be contacted to provide further clarification.

Award Notification

All bidders will be notified of the party/parties receiving an award, rights to appeal. After selecting a training organization(s), the DWP reserves the right to negotiate the scope of work and fees to optimize the use of the ERG. Contracts may be renegotiated each year based upon the need for operator training and available funding. Attached are examples of riders that will be included in all contracts with the Department. The selected organization(s) will receive a contract to provide services. No work is to proceed without receipt of signed contract. All decisions are contingent on approval by the State Purchase Review Committee.